

Fund Balance Policy

Compliant with GASB 54

Town of Barrington

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide adequate financial resources to ensure the continued orderly operation of government and the provision of services to residents and the continued stability of the tax rate structure that can be threatened by uncertainty from a number of areas and to establish a key element of the financial stability of the Town by setting guidelines for fund balance. Unassigned fund balance is an important measure of economic stability. It is essential that the Town maintain adequate levels of unassigned fund balance to mitigate financial risks that can occur from unforeseen revenue fluctuations, unanticipated expenditures and similar circumstances. The maintenance of an adequate general fund unassigned fund balance, consistent with recognized national and State of New Hampshire recommended standards and practices and past experience, is intended to help achieve this objective. The fund balance also provides cash flow liquidity for the Town's general operations which will reduce interest and other borrowing costs associated with Tax Anticipation Notes.
2. In accordance with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 54, *Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions*, effective for periods ended June 30, 2011, the Board of Selectmen recognizes the following with regards to fund balance.

Fund balance must be classified into one or more of the five following categories:

- a. **Nonspendable Fund Balance** – permanent trust funds (nonexpendable portion) non-cash assets such as inventories or prepaid items.
 - b. **Restricted Fund Balance** – funds legally restricted for specific purposes, such as grant, library, income balance of permanent funds, and capital project fund cannot change purpose.
 - c. **Committed Fund Balance** – amounts that can only be used for specific purposes pursuant to a formal vote at Town Meeting; such as expendable trust (capital reserve), nonlapsing appropriations, and other special revenue funds not listed under restricted can change purpose via vote at Town Meeting.
 - d. **Assigned Fund Balance** – amounts intended by the Board for specific purposes. The Board can choose to delegate this authority to the Town Administrator or Finance Director, depending on the situation. Items that would fall under this type of fund balance could be encumbrances.
 - e. **Unassigned Fund Balance** – residual spendable fund balance after subtracting all of the above amounts.
3. **Restricted Fund Balance.** Includes library, grants, and capital project funds, as well as income balances of permanent funds.
 4. **Committed Fund Balance.** The Town Meeting, as the government's highest level of decision-making authority, may authorize special revenue funds in accordance with the provisions of the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSAs) and expendable trust (capital reserve funds).

5. Assigned Fund Balance - Lapse of Appropriations. All appropriations shall lapse at the end of the fiscal year unless authorized in accordance with the provision of RSA 32:7.
6. Spending Prioritizations:
 - a. When an expenditure is incurred that would qualify for payment with either restricted or unrestricted funds, it will be paid first from restricted funds unless legal requirements disallow it.
 - b. When an expenditure is incurred that qualifies for payment from either of the three unrestricted fund balance categories, it will be applied in the following order:
 - 1) Committed, 2) Assigned, and 3) Unassigned.
7. The Town will follow the provisions of the State Municipal Budget Law (RSA 32) in emergency situations which may cause an over-expenditure of total appropriations.
8. The Board will maintain an appropriate level of unassigned fund balance following the guidelines established by the NH Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) that municipalities retain between 8% and 17% of regular general fund operating revenues. This is calculated by adding the municipality's general fund operating appropriations, the state education tax amount, the local school net tax commitment, and the county appropriation.
9. Annual Review. Compliance with the provisions of this policy shall be reviewed as a part of the annual budget adoption process.

Adopted by Board of Selectmen May 21, 2012

Readopted by Board February 18, 2013